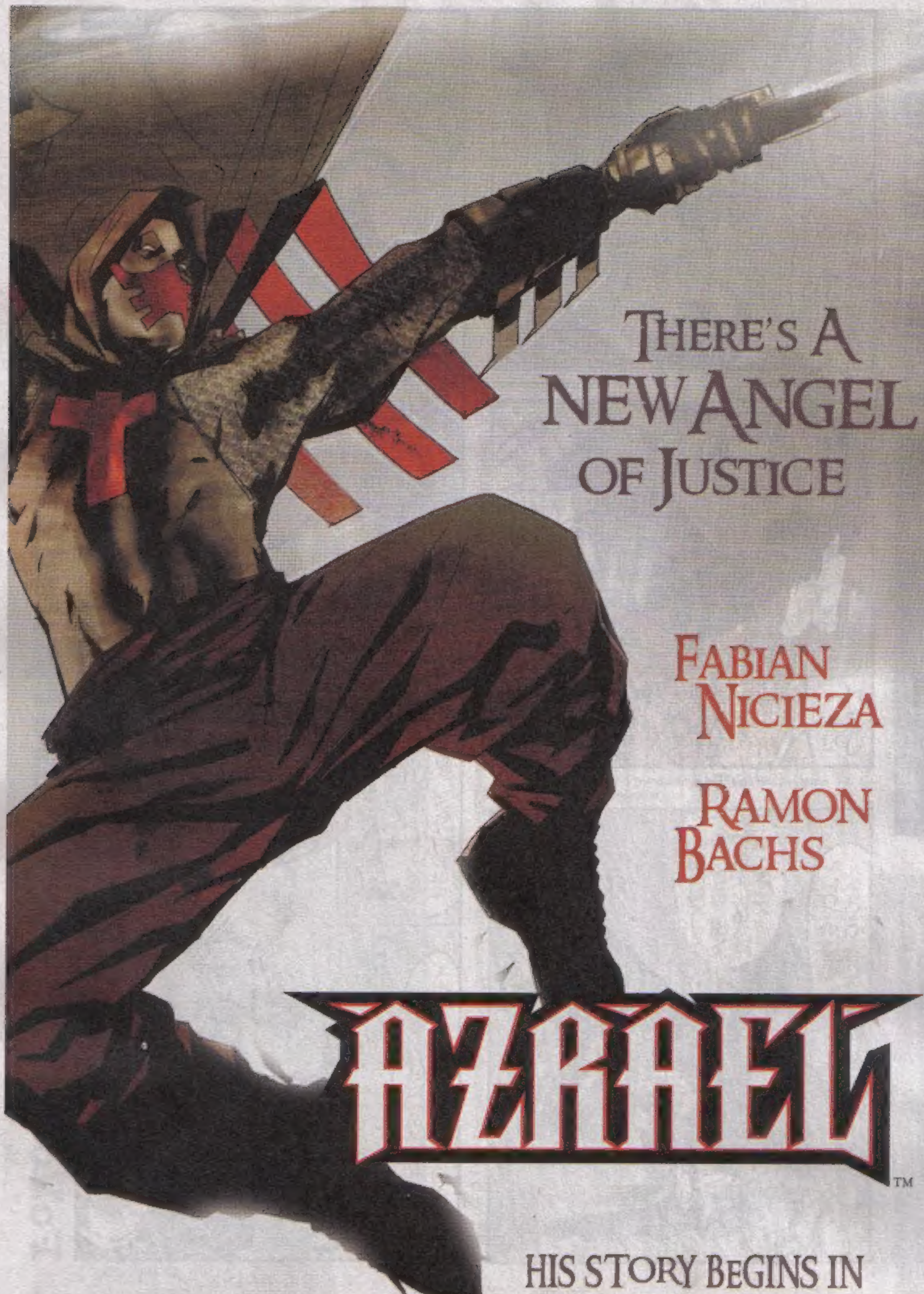
COMIC SHOP NEWS

Hatter M: The Looking Glass Wars



HIS STORY BEGINS IN

BATMAN ANNUAL #27 & DETECTIVE COMICS #11

AND THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES IN A NEW MONTHLY SERIES

OCTOBER 2009

dccomics.com

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The Man With the Hat Is Back!

Come on, 'fess up—you thought we were talking about that adventurer guy who's named after a state, didn't you? No, the Man with the Hat that we're referring to is Hatter Madigan, the star of ***Hatter M: The Looking Glass Wars.*** His quest for the lost princess Alyss continues this fall in a sequel, ***Hatter M: The Looking Glass Wars Volume 2—Mad With Wonder.***

It's been almost four years since writer/creator *Frank Beddor* first invited readers into the fantasy world of Hatter Madigan and Princess Alyss; why the long delay? "Oh I have my reasons and they are all good!" Beddor said with a laugh. "For the first miniseries I released it as individual issues—so even though it took us one year to get out all four issues, it was still something in the pipeline on a regular basis. These were collected into a trade hardback and released in 2006 with the paperback coming out in 2007.

"Ideally, volume two would have followed much sooner than 2009, but *Ben Templesmith's* schedule was too booked to be able to commit to doing the art, so even though I had the script ready, I had to find an artist that would be a smooth transition from Ben's work. They had to be *good* and they had to be *available* – not an easy equation. The fact that I stopped doing single issues and opted to publish the second volume of Hatter's quest as a 208-page graphic novel slowed us down as well."

"The downside [of publishing an original graphic novel] is less regular and immediate exposure, but the benefits are numerous. We can spend more time on the story; if the story or character takes an interesting turn, we have the time to rewrite and make changes. It becomes less about production and more about creative execution."

Not only did Beddor decide to offer the entire book as an original graphic novel, he also decided to publish it through his own company, Automatic Pictures Publishing, rather than taking it to another publisher. What led to that decision? "When you have a new story trying to break out of the pack, it takes a special kind of investment and most publishers don't like to go 'all in' until they can see a return," Beddor said. "I wanted to offer readers the highest quality, maximum content. Also, I had developed my own methodology for marketing and promoting my own work and wanted to test it out. So all in all, other than finding an excellent printer (which was only one Google search away) I was doing most of the work already—so why not go 'all in'?"

He met a bold woman who informed him of an orphanage...
Controlled by a secret cabal named the Baanskratar. An enemy of imagination.
We staged a memory download – and the contents of his mind were revealed.
We discovered a new Queen was on Wonderland's throne...
And in control of the Heart Crystal!
We rejoiced in the knowledge that Black Imagination would soon be flowing from Wonderland.
In an effort to stop this Military man from reaching his objective we summoned the Dark Walkers... and supplied them with a stimulus...

Once the decision was made, it took a while to get up to speed regarding the methodology of the comic shop market—solicitation schedules, publishing timelines, etc. "It was a real trial by fire," Beddor said. "Luckily, *Joe Pruett* of Desperado proved to be a wonderful mentor. That's not to say I'm *completely* up to speed; when dealing with any aspect of publishing, you're learning on the fly."

What's the focus of ***Hatter M Volume 2?*** "Royal Bodyguard Hatter Madigan's mad quest to find Alyss continues. In ***Volume 2, Mad With Wonder,*** Hatter follows the Glow from London to the battlefields of America's Civil War in search of the Princess who must some day be Queen. The America that Hatter encounters is a sprawling, wounded, boiling landscape of innocence and energy run amok. The war is tearing the country apart and yet Hatter must maintain his sanity in this maelstrom of holy rollers, child healers, prophetic snake handlers, deranged outlaws, passionate southern belles and rational men. As Hatter searches, he learns he is not the only Wonderland presence that has found its way to the Promised Land. Queen Redd's Black Imagination is fueling the Civil War and threatening our world with her evil."

Beddor is launching ***Mad With Wonder*** as part of a ***Looking Glass Wars*** media blitz. "***ArchEnemy,*** the third and final novel in my ***Looking Glass Wars*** trilogy, will be available October 15th in the US--same day and date as ***Hatter M: Mad With Wonder. Archenemy*** will come out in the UK in May 2010."

What's the relationship between the graphic novel and the ***Looking Glass Wars*** trilogy? "It's a parallel story to ***The Looking Glass Wars,***" Beddor explained. "While ***The Looking Glass Wars*** tells of her exile from Princess Alyss' point-of-view, the graphic novels follow Hatter's story. In my prose novel, I tell the beginning of Royal Bodyguard Hatter Madigan's storyline. The graphic novel fills in what happened during Hatter's mad quest to find the lost princess of Wonderland."

How long has ***Mad With Wonder*** been in production? "We've been working on the overall A-Z storyline of Hatter's quest since I made the decision to do the parallel story as first a comic mini-series—and then, given the excellent response to ***Volume One,*** an ongoing series of graphic novels," Beddor said. "As many have learned from reading our books, the Hatter M Institute for Paranormal Travel is the 'machine' behind the cartographic research and meticulous vetting that we have been doing to detail the years of Hatter's search. So, while we know the routes Hatter traveled and we know the ending, the writing and art must fill in the years, the miles and the obstacles."

How many more adventures in Hatter M's quest are still to be told? "We have the script completed for ***Volume Three The Nature Of Wonder*** and are working now on ***Volume Four: Of Warriors And Wonder.*** I'll let you know when we finally see it through to 'fruition'—if by that you mean it wins permanent recognition in pop culture!"

Since *Ben Templesmith* wasn't available to illustrate ***Mad With Wonder,*** Beddor had to find a capable replacement—and with a little help, he found just the right illustrator for the job. "*Sami Makkonen,* a Finnish artist whose name came to me via a tip from *Joe Pruett,* had worked with Joe illustrating two graphic novels for Desperado: ***Blue*** (2008) and ***Deadworld Slaughterhouse*** (2009), Once again, Joe proved to be an invaluable help and ***Hatter M Volume 2*** was on its way," Beddor said, adding, "Of course, Ben has an open invitation to work with us anytime, the success of the series is in large part due to Ben's involvement with ***Volume One.***

"The great thing about working with Sami is that his art is *awesome*—and he's on board for volumes three and four! So ***Hatter M: The Nature of Wonder*** will be available next summer."

The Looking Glass Wars trilogy and the ***Hatter M*** graphic novel series aren't Beddor's only excursions into the world of Hatter Madigan and Alyss. Beddor has a blend of online game and collectible card game in development. "***The Looking Glass Wars Online and Offline Collectible Card Game*** is a unique multiplayer card game that enacts a battle of imagination with an ever-expanding universe of WonderNation cards, including Kings, Queens, Princesses, numbered card soldiers, items, and the Glow of Imagination. Players deal their decks into battle, trying to surround and outnumber their opponent's forces, while connecting to and defending the powerful sources of Imagination. As part of the online CardSoldierWars.com experience, the online card game is integrated with the rest of Wonderland universe, and utilizes the rich mythology and characters, as well as the spectacular artwork that brings it to life.

"The card game is being released concurrently with ***ArchEnemy*** and ***Hatter M: Mad With Wonder*** on October 15. For now, it's only a virtual game, but as the popularity grows we have plans to sell it in comic shops as a physical game. It features art from some of Hollywood's most highly regarded concept artists, such as *Vance Kovacs* (***Narnia***), *Stephen Martiniere* (***I, Robot***) and *Brian Flora* (***Beowulf***).

"The Card Soldier Wars is an online gaming community based on my books. It is structured as a persistent browser based game where players undertake the role of a General in Wonderland. Players build their wealth and status, ranking themselves amongst other players in the game. The game has a real-time, life management system similar to massively multiplayer role playing games. Players establish trade with other players, incur and develop a work force and army, partake in missions for the sake of the Queen, and protect their enterprises from disparaged Wonderlanders. The game is free to play, but we're adding purchasable premium content."

And of course, one has to wonder if a film might be in the works, based on either the novels or the graphic novels. "I have been working on the script for the ***Hatter M*** movie, as well as meeting with filmmakers; I have my fingers crossed that the material will attract an A-list director"

Graphic novels, prose novels, an online game, a card game, a possible film—does Automatic have anything else in the works regarding the world of ***Hatter M?*** "We have six webisodes filling in adventures in Hatter's journey that we will be putting online in the near future. For these, I invited various writers to work with me, and I really enjoyed the process. And eventually, I would like to publish original comics and graphic novels by other writers and creators—but for now I have my hands full!"

Hatter M: The Looking Glass Wars Volume 2—Mad With Wonder, an original graphic novel by *Frank Beddor, Liz Cavalier, & Sami Makkonen,* is slated for mid-October release. The book will be simultaneously offered in both hardcover ($24.99) and trade paperback ($14.95) formats.

by Cliff Biggers

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

COMIC SHOP NEWSARAMA

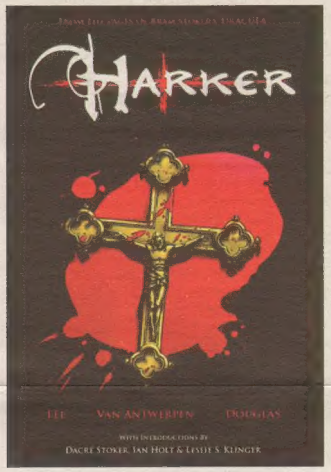
Produced by *Comic Shop News* in cooperation with *newsarama.com*

Harker—The Herald Vampire's Thing

Another vampire story? Nothing new there. Another vampire story featuring Jonathan and Mina Harker? Nothing new there, either. Another new vampire story featuring Dracula? Still nothing new.

Another vampire story featuring Jonathan and Mina Harker and Dracula—and it's endorsed by a member of the family of *Dracula* author *Bram Stoker?* Now *that's* news.

From the Pages of Bram Stoker's Dracula: Harker, a new graphic novel written by *Tony Lee,* is a sequel to the classic Stoker novel, picking up soon after the novel ends. "It starts six months after the Count dies and ends on the exact anniversary of his death," Lee said. "There's a reason that Jonathan and Mina's son Quincey is born that day, and this is the story why."



Lee explained how a member of the Stoker family became peripherally involved with ***Harker.*** "We were fortunate to get introductions by *Ian Holt* and *Bram Stoker's* great-grandnephew *Dacre Stoker,* who have both just written the first 'official' Dracula sequel, ***Dracula: The Undead***—and another by *Leslie S. Klinger,* who, as well as being known as an expert on all things Sherlock Holmes, is the author of the ***New Annotated Dracula*** book, with an introduction by *Neil Gaiman,* who he's working on ***The Annotated Sandman*** with for Vertigo. With these people endorsing the book and incredible artists, I had to write a good book!"

Lee's interest in vampires goes back many years, so he knows enough about the *Dracula* canon to realize that many more recent vampire projects have drifted rather far afield from the official story. "I've loved vampire movies and comics since I was a child, and it was always a given that down the line I'd do something involving them," Lee said. "But I was always annoyed at the cheesy way some of the movies used vampires, in particular Dracula -- almost as a 'we're ignoring everything else' attitude was prevalent. And as far as I was concerned, if you're using someone as iconic as Dracula, you have to use the backstory. He's almost two dimensional without it."

Once he decided he wanted to do a Dracula story that was faithful to Stoker's novel, he took the idea one step further and decided to do a sequel told in the style of the original work. As it turned out, his prior experience with another graphic novel sequel to a classic prose work helped guide him in the right direction with ***Harker.*** "A few years back I wrote a graphic novel called ***Dodge & Twist***... it's very much an '***Oliver Twist*** twelve years on/***Oceans Eleven*** if written by *Charles Dickens*' type of book—but more importantly a 'what happened next?' for the characters. I wanted to do the same thing for ***Dracula***. I wanted to show what happened directly afterwards. Not twelve years later, but later that same year. The end of the novel by Stoker has an end note set seven years later which throws up more questions than answers, and I wanted to use some of these in it."

The graphic novel begins as a story of revenge, as Dracula's one remaining bride, the Countess Dracule, arrives in London looking to kill the Hunters and take Mina's baby as a host for her husband's vampiric essence, currently surviving as a voice in Mina's head. "And of course she needs allies, and so brings Renfield back as a zombified assistant, as well as creating her own 'grooms of Dracule,'" Lee said.

"Of course, Jonathan needs his own allies, but things are a bit lost on his side - Arthur is distracted, seeing visions of Lucy on a London street, Seward has found a new love and is morphine addicted, and Van Helsing has a dark secret that is related to this new Vampire Countess—one that involves her sister, the Countess Von Gratz, the one seen in Bram Stoker's short story (and a tale believed removed from the start of the novel *Dracula* itself) 'Dracula's Guest.'

"We have shocks, thrills and spills. And an adventure that travels through London, Whitby, Munich and ends on the very Borgo Pass that Dracula starts on. It's been quoted as 'the most faithful sequel to ***Dracula*** ever' and I can't hope for a better compliment," Lee said.

From the Pages of Bram Stoker's Dracula: Harker, written by *Tony Lee* and illustrated by *Neil Van Antwerpen & Peter-David Douglas,* is slated for November release from AAM/Markosia.

CSNsider

•*Cameron Stewart* has been tapped to illustrate the third story arc in ***Batman & Robin,*** which begins in December's ***B & R #7.*** While this is Stewart's first superhero collaboration with *Grant Morrison,* the two have worked together on a pair of ***Seaguy*** miniseries.

•***Models Inc #2*** will feature a previously-unannounced tabloid variant cover by *Steve Kurth;* it is offered without restrictions or limits.

Models, Inc.
JILL & JOHNNY
HOT STUFF!!!
TONY STARK
Missing millionaire or sunning in St. Tropez?
EXCLUSIVE PHOTOS INSIDE!
THE FASHIONABLE AND THE FANTASTIC MAKE A SIZZLING DUO... BUT CAN IT LAST?
WHAT'S UP WITH MILLIE?
INSIDERS DISH ON THE MEN, THE DRUGS AND THE SELF-DESTRUCTION
MARVEL

•*Marc Guggenheim* has announced that he will be leaving the Spidey writing team after his "Who Was Ben Reilly?" arc that begins in ***Amazing Spider-Man #608.*** On the marvel.com website, Guggenheim said that "this will be my last arc on the book as a member of Spidey's 'Webheads.' I'd been thinking of an exit strategy for a while now because my workload has gotten so heavy, and the inter-coordination required to write Spider-Man was something I found myself having less and less time to devote to. I was going to write one more arc, but I was so happy with the way this one was turning out that I thought this should be my swan song. Hopefully, people will buy the book, read it and agree with me.

"But I'm still keeping my toes in the Spidey-Pool. I'm writing the three-part ***Amazing Spider-Man Presents Jackpot,*** that guest stars Spidey, on sale in January. Check it out! And I hope to do future Spidey projects that don't require as much inter-coordi-

SPIDER-MAN BY STAN LEE & LARRY LIEBER

WOW, BIGSHOT, WE'RE MOVIN' LIKE GREASED LIGHTNING!
IT'S THOSE NEW TURBOS I HAD INSTALLED!
VROOOOMM
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 9-24
AND YER NEW SMOKE SCREEN IS STOPPIN' THE COPS!
POLICE
YEAH, BUT LOOK WHAT'S DEAD AHEAD!
stanzlarz @ aol.com
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nation as the semi-weekly does."

•Creative changes for several Superman family titles: *Greg Rucka & Sterling Gates* are writing ***Action Comics #881*** and ***Supergirl #45;*** Pere Pérez is illustrating ***Action #s 881 & 882;*** *Matt Camp* is illustrating ***Supergirl #47;*** *Fernando Dagnino & Raúl Fernandez* are illustrating ***Superman #692;*** and *Javier Pina* is illustrating ***Superman #694.***

•*Cruddie Torian* has been tapped as artist for ***Gen13*** beginning with #33. He'll be joined by *Adam Beechen*, who'll be handling the writing duties for ***Gen13 #s 33 & 34.*** And yes, that *is* Squire pictured in Stewart's cover art.. so where's Robin? (As for *Frazer Irving*, who was initially mentioned as artist for the third arc... rumor has it he'll now be on hand for the fourth arc, with *Frank Quitely* reported to return to the title next spring.)

•***X-Babies #s 1 & 2*** will be offered with previously-unannounced Star Comics variant covers by *Jacob Chabot*; there are no restrictions or limits on these incentives.

•***Marvel Holiday Spectacular*** will be offered with a previously-unannounced Spider-Man Balloon variant cover; it is offered without restrictions or limits.

•*Dirk Wood* has been named as director of communications for Dark Horse; among many other duties, he will oversee the company's Free Comic Book Day involvement.

Back to Press

•***Batman & Robin #1 4th Printing*** (AUG098009), featuring a recolored version of the *Frank Quitely* cover, in stores 10/7.

•***The Torch #1 2nd Printing Berkenkotter Variant*** (JUL098302), in stores 10/17.

•***Invincible Iron Man #17 2nd Printing Larroca Variant*** (JUL098304), in stores 10/14.

•***Deadpool #15 2nd Printing Medina Variant*** (JUL098303), in stores 10/14.

•***Marvel Zombies Return 2nd Printing Suydam Variant*** (JUL098318), in stores 10/14.

•***Ultimate Spider-Man #2 2nd Printing LaFuente Variant*** (JUL098320), in stores 10/14.

•***Dark Reign: The List—Avengers 2nd Printing Djurdjevic Variant*** (AGU098008), in stores 10/21.

•***Chew #2 4th Printing*** (JUL098323), in stores 10/7.

•***Chew #3 3rd Printing*** (JUL098324), in stores 10/7.

•***Chew #4 2nd Printing*** (JUL098325), in stores 10/7.

Bluewater's Revolutionary Rock Bios

Last week, ***CSN*** told you about Bluewater Productions' plan to bring long-unavailable rock bios from Revolutionary Comics back to press in a series of graphic novels. This week, publisher *Darren G. Davis* offered more details on the project and how it came about.

The deal began when "*Jay Sanford* contacted me to introduce himself to me because we were doing the biography comics," Davis said. "With his success in doing the biography comics in the 90's, it really felt like he was passing the baton to us. I knew about these comics and have some of them in my collection.

"We spoke about the trials and tribulations of doing the biography comics and then I asked him what he was doing with his library; from there, we came up with doing the line of graphic novels based on the evergreen titles like the Beatles, Elvis, and Led Zeppelin. This was the perfect fit for us, since we are already achieving quite a bit of success in this marketplace.

"The best part of working with Rock & Roll Comics is that they paved the way for this genre of biographical comics, and we benefit by learning from what they have done. Jay has now become a mentor to me."

While some people have dismissed biographical comics as a fad, Davis is convinced that the success of Revolutionary's Rock 'N' Roll Comics in the 90s—as well as his current success with political and entertainment biographical comics—proves both the legitimacy and the popularity of the genre. "We have gotten a lot of crap for doing biography comics, because they don't fit into what some people's perception of what a comic book should be," Davis said. "I have nothing but respect for this genre and what people do not realize is that we are driving new readers into comic book stores. They come in to get a *Michelle Obama* biography comic, and they pick up Spider-Man for their kid.

"I have to admit, I never thought my comic career would take me into doing comics based on *Stephenie Meyer, Hillary Clinton*, or *Barbara Walters*. We have been featured on CNN, Larry King Live, and Regis & Kelly. Who would have thought by doing something like this would turn into a phenomenon?"

The ten volumes initially announced by Bluewater don't include all of the ***Rock 'N' Roll Comics*** published by Revolutionary; will the missing volumes be reprinted in some form later on? "We might do something later," Davis said. "Most of the titles we came up with doing were the ones that did not require that we add pages to make them current. But we still have plans to do something with the others as well."

The original ***Rock 'N' Roll Comics*** were published in black and white, so "we're keeping them in their traditional black and white format," Davis said.

Revolutionary got out of ***Rock 'N Roll Comics*** fifteen years ago, which means that there are a lot of bands who never got spotlighted, or whose careers have bloomed since the line ended. Will Bluewater continue the line with new biographies? "We are definitely talking about developing new biographies together," Davis said.

While Davis admits that he would like to secure the rights to reprint earlier rock-related biographies such as ***The Beatles*** published in the 1960s by Dell (featuring art by *Joe Sinnott* with an assist from *Dick Giordano*), he said that, "for now we're going to stick with ***Rock 'N' Roll Comics***. This partnership is amazing, and I wouldn't want to do anything to detract from it. I agree, though, that having the Dell ***Beatles*** comics would be a cool feather in my cap—the art was amazing—but we have a lot to do with the ***Rock 'N' Roll*** library before we look any further. Readers will be surprised to see the contributors to these books; a lot of cool people got their start with ***Rock 'N' Roll***. There's even a persistent myth that *Neil Gaiman* did one," Davis said (alas, it remains a myth: while Revolutionary *did* talk to Gaiman about doing a Cure comics, the deal never came together."

Look for the first volume in the Bluewater graphic novel series, ***Hard Rock Heroes***, in December; it will feature biographies of Guns 'N' Roses, Metallica, AC/DC, Black Sabbath & Ozzy Osbourne, Motley Crue, Poison, Van Halen, Black Crowes,

Continued on page 6

SPIDER-MAN'S RIGHT IN FRONT OF US!
RUN 'IM DOWN!
WHEN HE'S SPLATTERED ALL OVER OUR WINDSHIELD--
PEOPLE'LL SIT UP AND TAKE NOTICE OF BIGSHOT!
BUT SOME SPIDERS AREN'T EASY TO SPLATTER!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 9-25
SPIDER-MAN JUMPED OVER US!
TURN AROUND! DON'T MISS 'IM NEXT TIME!
THEY DON'T REALIZE WHO THEY'RE MESSIN' WITH!
FWIP!
HE JUST WEBBED THE CAR!
GREAT! WE'LL DRAG 'IM ALONG LIKE BALLAST!
STAN/LARRY LEE/LIEBER 9-26
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OCTOBER 2009

JAMES ROBINSON

MARK BAGLEY

JUSTICE LEAGUE OF AMERICA

issue 38

A NEW ERA BEGINS

dccomics.com

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Motorhead, Pantera, Megadeath, Sammy Hagar, Anthrax, Joan Jett & Lita Ford, and Skid Row (whose biography is seeing print for the first time in this volume).

Franchise Transforms Into Ongoing Series

After launching numerous successful ***Transformers*** limited series and oneshots in the past few years, IDW has announced plans to launch a ***Transformers*** ongoing series this fall.

The new series, written by *Mike Costa* and illustrated by *Don Figueroa*, will launch with a pair of major events that will make this a must-read for all ***Transformers*** fans. "We've pulled out all the stops for our first ongoing ***Transformers*** series and now is a great time for the new series," said editor *Andy Schmidt*. "Since ***Transformers #1*** is the beginning of a whole new journey for ***Transformers*** comics, it's the perfect opportunity for new readers to get into the brand."

Transformers #1, slated for November release, is also the launching point for a pair of new miniseries: ***Transformers: Bumblebee*** (debuting in December) and ***Transformers: Last Stand of the Wreckers*** (debuting in January).

And to help bring readers up to speed on IDW's ***Transformers*** books, the company is also offering ***Transformers: Continuum,*** written by editor *Andy Schmidt*, that offers an overview of the five years' worth of IDW Transformers tales that lead up to this ongoing series launch; ***Continuum*** will also be available in November to coincide with the debut of ***Transformers #1.***

DiDio Delivers the Dish

In the most recent of his regular chats with fans at newsarama.com, DCU Executive Editor *Dan DiDio* had plenty to say about upcoming events in the DCU. Here are the highlights:

•Regarding changes in creative teams and focus on *Superman/Batman:* "We have a ***Blackest Night*** crossover taking place. And we have changed teams on the book. Right now, we're putting together other projects for those two as well, because we'd like to have them still involved in the DC Universe for sure. But our plans for ***Superman/Batman*** are interesting. Over the next few months, you're going to see ***Superman/Batman*** actually reflecting major events of the past of the DC Universe. We're going to be building on other stories, other events, using these characters. So you're going to see an expansion on ***Superman/Batman's*** role in the post-'Emperor Joker's' world. So you're going to see effects of 'Emperor Joker' in ***Superman/Batman***. As well as 'Our Worlds at War.' There are going to be events that we're going to be filling out there.

"So for folks who had fun and enjoyed these big events of the past, we're going to revisit them in the ***Superman/Batman*** book. And expand on the stories of those. And those stories will fit within continuity even more tightly now because they're written with the current DC Universe in mind... [The stories] take place in the past, in the time period where those events are taking place...

"Right now, we have a year's worth of stories figured out for it. I would consider that a long-term plan. And if it succeeds, we'll continue in this fashion. We have a lot of events in the DC Universe that these two characters participated in. So in that case, I want to make sure we expand on those concepts as much as possible."

•Regarding George Pérez's next project for DC: "There are rumors floating around our building that he and Marv are picking up where they left off 20 years ago on the ***Teen Titans: Games*** hardcover, original graphic novel. And it sounds like that's something we'd like to see come to completion for a release in 2010..."

•On the $6.99 pricepoint for the upcoming *Lobo: Highway to Hell* miniseries: "You won't be seeing more $6.99 books. The page count and size and format were the reason for that price point in this particular case. We realized we could not bring this in at any other price point. But because we understand everybody is price sensitive right now, we will shy away from repeating that. It's not someplace we'll be visiting on any level of regularity."

•On plans for *Adventure Comics*, now that *Paul Levitz* has been confirmed as the next writer of the Legion feature: "The change was in the works already before Paul stepped into the mix. And the change started at the moment we decided *Francis [Manapul]* was going to be the artist on ***The Flash***... We needed to get Francis and *Geoff [Johns]* off the ***Adventure Comics*** series so they could concentrate on ***The Flash*** ongoing.

"So we knew we had a change there. We just weren't sure exactly where and when. And we were going back and forth on which issue it was because Geoff had a really wonderful Superboy story that he wanted to tell that, unfortunately, will have to be pushed to a later date.

"But my goal now is to get those guys going on ***Flash*** as soon as possible. And then when all the changes started to occur, Paul was our only choice for the series. And to be quite frank with you, before even knowing everything that was taking place, Paul was the person we were thinking about approaching for the series as well, given his association with the Legion, given his association with ***Adventure Comics***, and his love for the title, and his love for those characters. It only made sense for him to be the one to take this and move it to its next incarnation."

As far as Legion artists are concerned, "I don't have the artist chosen yet. We have several people in mind. What I really want to do is sit down with Paul to see what his direction, tone and feel is. And to work with him on selecting the proper artist. We want to make sure he's a part of the process as well, in choosing the artist for the book.

But because there are so many things going on now, that's a little on hold for the second. What Paul's been doing is actually getting up to speed on the Legion of Super-Heroes. He's just been going through all the work Geoff has done on the characters lately, as well as *James Robinson*. And he's looking to build on the foundation we have going right now."

And regarding what happens to the Conner Kent feature in ***Adventure,*** DiDio confirmed that "we're going to see Conner's, probably, gradual leave from that book. But that's not to say Conner won't be joining a team book soon, or appearing in another series of his own at some point."

•On plans for DC's next weekly series: "The next weekly, or I should say the next *weeklies*, will hit in the second or third quarter of next year. That's when we're planning to launch them. The reason we're holding back on so much information involving anything right now is I'm trying to keep the post-***Blackest Night*** universe under wraps as much as possible at this time.

"Both of these series that we're talking about—or at least one of the series we're talking right now, weekly-wise— comes directly out of a post-***Blackest Night*** DCU, and therefore I'm trying to be as judicious as possible on the information we give out..."

•On the return of Elseworlds books under the direction of editor *Mike Carlin*: "It's a series of prestige-format novels that we were creating. We haven't used the prestige format for awhile, and we were using those stories for off-continuity type stories. One of the first ones out of the gate is going to be a four-part *Cary Bates* multiverse story featuring Superman, if I'm not mistaken. And I know there might be one or two others in the works right now.

"Those books were built primarily because we wanted to work with those creators on those particular stories, without going through trying to build more multiverse worlds."

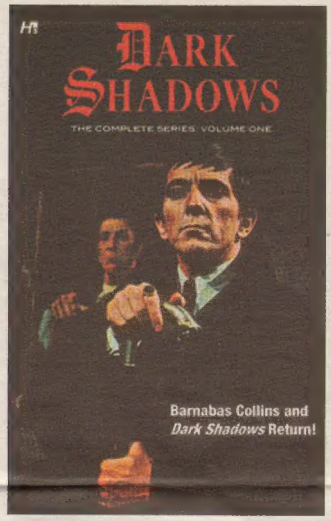
As to how this differs from the ***All-Star*** approach, DiDio said that "with ***All-Star,*** we were trying to go for a more iconic interpretation of the characters, and this is really where we're twisting the initial concepts of the characters. It's using the base story and then, just like the old Elseworlds used to do, twisting them in a really unique way.

"I've said this on several occasions. Where I felt Elseworlds went off track was when it started to become just Batman in the 1800s, Batman in the 1900s, Batman as a British knight, Batman as... well, I can't say caveman anymore. But you know, it just became just slight variations on different time periods. Here, we want to really explore the lore, the basis of the lore, and then really see what would happen if we changed some of the origin and tell an interesting story with it."

•On the importance of *Grant Morrison's* creative vision on the new DC Multiverse: "I almost wish that people could sit in on a conversation with Grant about the multiverse. It's so clear in his mind, what he wants it to be. And the changes are so

important, so dramatic, but so subtle, that if not executed properly, it will just feel like more of the same. But executed the way he discusses them can make it feel extraordinarily special. At this point, there's no reason for us to just have more incarnations of our characters floating around in different worlds. We need them to be extraordinarily special. And it's worth the wait for a person like Grant on those things."

•On the relationship of the upcoming *Doc Savage* series with the DC Multiverse: "In reality, we didn't look at it as one of the [52] worlds. But we always had a pulp universe world as one of the 52. So yes, it's one of the 52."



Dark Shadows Back in the Spotlight

The current renaissance of long-unavailable 1960s comics continues in 2010 with the addition of collected volumes of Silver Age soap-opera-inspired comics. But it's not just *any* soap opera that served as the inspiration for these books... it's a soap opera that featured vampires long before they became media darlings.

Dark Shadows, the ABC soap opera that focused on the vampiric Barnabas Collins, was the inspiration for a long-running Gold Key comics series that ran for the better part of a decade. Now Hermes Press is bringing those books back into print in a series of five hardcovers debuting in the spring of 2010 with ***The Complete Dark Shadows Comics Volume One,*** a compilation of the first seven issues of the series written by *Arnold Drake, Donald Arneson,* and others and illustrated by *Joe Certa.*

The digitally restored comics, shot from printed copies of the original books (no plates or stats of Gold Key's Silver Age output are known to survive today), will be supplemented with poster art, pinups, and background material relating to the cult-favorite soap opera.

Interest in the comics is certain to peak once *Tim Burton* completes his next major project: a big-screen ***Dark Shadows*** film starring *Johnny Depp* as Barnabas Collins.

The Complete Dark Shadows Comics Volume One HC is slated for March 2010 release.

WizKids Back from the Dead

Last year, it appears that WizKids and HeroClix were deader than dead—but apparently, they're harder to kill than zombies, because they're back as part of NECA's product line.

NECA has acquired the rights to both WizKids and the Clix line of games, including HeroClix, ActionClix, HorrorClix, and SportsClix. Additionally, they have acquired the rights to the PocketModel constructible games, which includes the various Pirates games, and to the Mage Knight line (which was moribund before former owner Topps cancelled the WizKids line).

The company will operate as a wholly owned NECA subsidiary under the direction of *Lax Chandra,* who headed the subsidiary for Topps; look for announcements of new product lines in the near future, including new Clix offerings featuring both Marvel and DC characters.

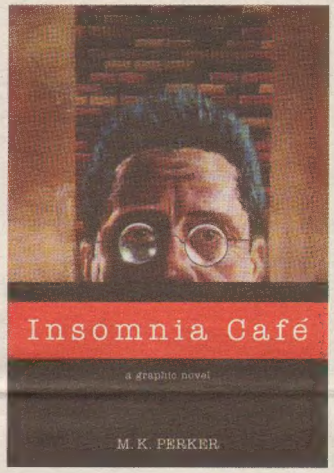
Insomnia Cafe—MK Perker's Sleeper Hit?

In the minds of most readers, *MK Perker* has probably been categorized as an illustrator—the man who supplies the visuals for *G. Willow Wilson's* moody graphic novel ***Cairo*** as well as Wilson's offbeat and slightly surreal ***Air,*** a Vertigo hit that was one of this year's best-new-series Eisner nominees.

As it turns out, the Turkish-born Perker is a writer as well as an illustrator—and readers will have an opportunity to admire his skill at both in graphic novel ***Insomnia Cafe,*** a story about a book expert and a library. But this is not just any book expert... and it's not just any library... This library is home to rare and unseen books that date back many centuries.

" ***Insomnia Café*** is a very strange graphic novel in its approach to the story line," Perker told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Chris Arrant,* "but with realistic characters with real emotions, ideas, failures and fears. The story evolves around Peter Kolinsky, a former hand-written books expert, and a place called Insomnia Café and the girl who runs the place. One day, an old client of Kolinsky—a very dangerous one—shows up with an old book and the story takes off. Kolinsky, with no sleep, starts escaping from things, but also chasing things in a hallucination-like life. You know how it happens in dreams: it's you, but it's not you. The same thing happens to Kolinsky while he's awake. It's his life... but it's not.

"Peter Kolinsky is a complex character. He's smart, has a certain talent and an insomniac with a really dark mind. He's someone whose life is constantly getting



more complicated and who is constantly running out of luck and I think a man in this kind of a mind set would easily fall in love with someone who is a little bit quirky. So he falls in love with Angela, the girl who runs the coffee shop."

His romance is soon overshadowed by a mystery, however, when Kolinsky finds himself drawn into a complex plot involving a secret library, rare and mysterious tomes, and black marketers who are willing to commit any crime—including murder—to gain control of this library and its contents.

Insomnia Cafe, a $14.95 graphic novel, is slated for October 21st release.

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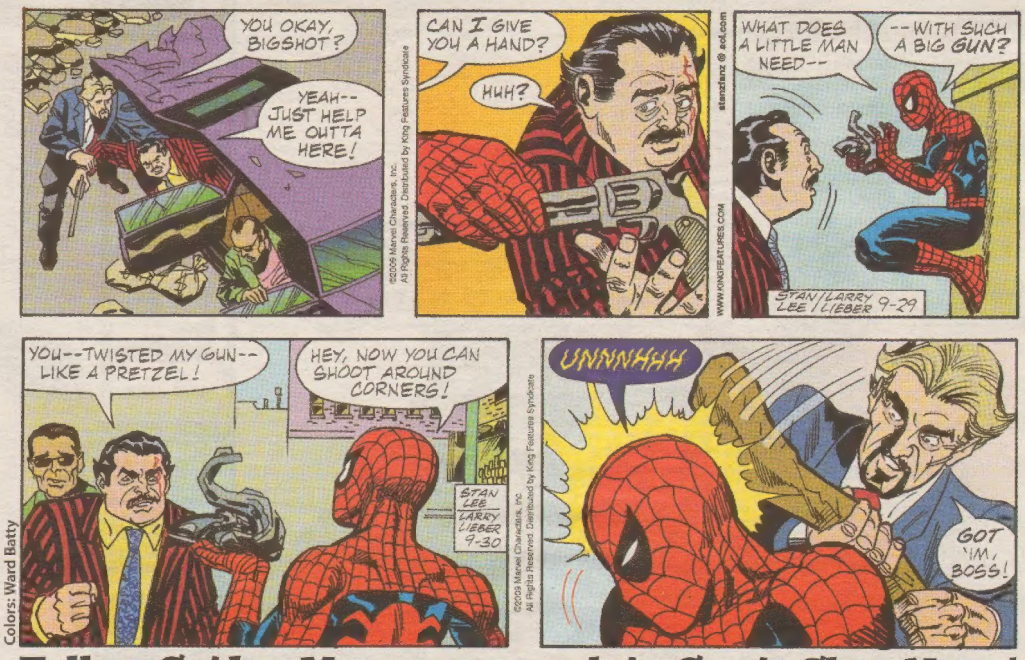
YOU OKAY, BIGSHOT?
YEAH-- JUST HELP ME OUTTA HERE!
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--WITH SUCH A BIG GUN?
STAN/LARRY LEE/LIEBER 9-29
YOU--TWISTED MY GUN-- LIKE A PRETZEL!
HEY, NOW YOU CAN SHOOT AROUND CORNERS!
STAN LEE LARRY LIEBER 9-30
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UNNNHHH
GOT 'IM, BOSS!

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